

IN THE CLAIMS:

The pending claims are as follows:

1-44. (Canceled)

45. (Currently Amended) A method for searching messages in a conversation-based message system, comprising:

at a client:

in response to receiving a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms: [[:]]

transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system;

receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier, and wherein each conversation comprises one or more messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet first predefined criteria and at least one conversation in the list of conversations comprises a plurality of messages; and

presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with second predefined criteria.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the second predefined criteria includes a date/time value of a most recently received message of a respective conversation.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein the second predefined criteria includes a date/time value of a most recently received message of a respective conversation relevant to the search query.

49. (Currently Amended) A method for searching messages, comprising:

at a client:

responding to a search request from a user of the client, the search request including one or more user-specified query terms, including:

communicating ~~[[a]]~~the search request over a network to a messaging system;

receiving from the messaging system over the network a plurality of messages, each message having a unique message identifier and belonging to a respective conversation;

generating a plurality of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of messages, wherein at least one conversation of the generated plurality of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages; and

displaying a list of conversations, from among the plurality of conversations, in an order determined in accordance with predefined criteria, each conversation being represented as a single item in the list of conversations.

50. (Currently Amended) A method for displaying messages, comprising:
at a server:

in response to a search request from a user of a client, the search request including one or more user-specified query terms, including:

receiving a plurality of messages directed to a user, each message having a unique message identifier;

generating a plurality of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages, wherein at least one conversation of the generated plurality of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages;

selecting a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with a predefined query; and

transmitting over a network to a client for display the list of conversations in an order determined in accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation being represented as a single item in the list of conversations.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, wherein the respective conversation identifier is distinct from a subject reference of the message.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.
53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, wherein each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.
54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 53, wherein the second predefined criteria include having a close temporal relationship among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.
55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 53, wherein the common set of characteristics include the subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.
56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein each conversation includes at least one electronic message relevant to the query.
57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined by second predefined criteria.
58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the query.
59. (Canceled)
60. (Canceled)
61. (Currently Amended) A system for searching messages, comprising:
in a server:
one or more processors;
memory coupled to the one or more processors, the memory storing:
a receiving module for receiving a plurality of messages directed to a user in response to receiving a query from the user, the query having one or more query terms, each message having a unique message identifier;

a conversation module for generating a plurality of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages, wherein at least one conversation of the generated plurality of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages; and

a display preparation module for selecting a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with a predefined query and preparing for transmission over a network for display on a client the list of conversations in an order determined in accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation being represented as a single item in the list of conversations.

62. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 61, wherein the respective conversation identifier is distinct from a subject reference of the message.

63. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 61, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.

64. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 61, wherein each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.

65. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 64, wherein the common set of characteristics includes having a close temporal relationship among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.

66. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 64, wherein the common set of characteristics includes a subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.

67. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 64, wherein the conversations are prepared for presentation to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the query.

68. (Currently Amended) A system for searching messages in a conversation-based message system, comprising:

in a client:

one or more processors;

memory coupled to the one or more processors, the memory storing:

a search module for receiving a query from a requestor and transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system, the query having one or more query terms;

a receiving module for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier, and wherein ~~each conversation comprises one or more messages~~ at least one conversation of the list of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages, and at least one message relevant to the query; and

a presentation module for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor.

69. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 68, wherein the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with predefined criteria.

70. (Currently Amended) A computer program product, for use in conjunction with a server computer system, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a search request from a user of a client, the query having one or more query terms, and responding to receipt of the search request, including:

instructions for receiving, at the server computer system, a plurality of messages directed to a user, each message having a unique message identifier;

instructions for generating, at the server computer system, a plurality of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages, wherein at least one conversation of the generated plurality of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages; and

instructions for selecting, at the server computer system, a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with a predefined query; and

instructions for preparing, at the server computer system, for transmission over a network for display on a client the list of conversations in an order determined in

accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation being represented as a single item in the list of conversations.

71. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 70, wherein the respective conversation identifier is different from a subject reference of the message.

72. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 70, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.

73. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 70, wherein each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.

74. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 73, wherein the common set of characteristics includes having a close temporal relationship among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.

75. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 74, wherein the common set of characteristics includes a subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.

76. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 70, wherein the instructions for preparing prepare the list of conversations for display in an order determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the predefined query.

77. (Currently Amended) A computer program product, for use in conjunction with a client computer system, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms, and responding to receipt of the search request, including:[[:]]

instructions for transmitting the query over a network from the client computer system to a conversation management system;

instructions for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier, and wherein each conversation comprises one or

more messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet first predefined criteria and at least one conversation of the generated list of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages, and at least one electronic message relevant to the query; and

instructions for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor.

78. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 77, wherein the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with second predefined criteria.

79. (Canceled)

80. (Canceled)

81. (Currently Amended) A system for searching messages in a conversation-based message system, comprising:

in a client:

processor means; and

memory means coupled to the processor means;

the system in the client including:

means for receiving a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms, and responding to receipt of the search request, including:[];[]

means for transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system;

means for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier, and wherein each conversation comprises one or more electronic messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet predefined criteria and at least one conversation of the generated plurality of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages; and

means for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor.